RAND CORPORATION

Research Report

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Literature Review on a Victim-Centered Approach to Countering Human Trafficking

The 2021 U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary's memo to DHS agency and office leaders describes the need to institutionalize a victim-centered approach, described as an "approach, which recognizes that restoring victims' security and autonomy benefits both victims and law enforcement. A victim-centered approach seeks to minimize

KEY FINDINGS

- A victim-centered approach is centered in a culture of continuous learning and collaboration.
- Most victim identification screening tools are implemented in clinical settings by clinical providers or social workers.
- Understanding the risk factors, understanding how an individual's exposure to trauma affects cognition, and recognizing common symptoms of trauma can inform agents in their daily work.
- Building a workforce capable of using trauma-informed and victim-centered approaches relies on effective training programs to build knowledge, capacity, and skills.
- Key skills to develop through training include avoiding retraumatization, building relationships with survivors, working with a diverse population, and conducting effective interviews with survivors.
- During training, alternatives to standard lectures can be valuable to encourage participation and skill retention.
- Implementation of a victim-centered approach requires organizational change and an overarching framework that affects every step and person within the system.
- The depth of knowledge about human trafficking, including prevalence rates and successful intervention methods, points to the difficulties in operationalizing an evidence-based, victim-centered approach.

additional trauma, mitigate undue penalization, and provide needed stability and support to victims. A victim-centered approach both equips and encourages victims of crime to participate actively in investigations, enabling law enforcement to better detect, investigate, and prosecute perpetrators" (DHS, 2021).

The DHS Center for Countering Human Trafficking (CCHT) commissioned a literature review to understand what is already known about a victim-centered approach within a law enforcement setting. The CCHT intends to incorporate these evidence-based and promising practices into human trafficking victim identification and screening, training, law enforcement operations, and policy throughout DHS.

We begin the report with a discussion of the various definitions used to discuss a victim-centered approach, and we end the report with a brief discussion of limitations and next steps.

Methods

In this section, we review the methods used for the literature review. Although the primary focus is specific to human trafficking, the literature review was expanded to practices in other disciplines (i.e., domestic violence, sexual assault). The review was also expanded to include trauma-informed approaches, which are complementary to victim-centered approaches.

We began by undertaking a systematic review of what is known about a victim-centered approach to addressing human trafficking. We gathered information about the current state of the approach through a systematic literature search. The literature review followed a systematic search strategy developed and piloted in consultation with the RAND librarian (see Appendix A for the search process used). The strategy incorporated a series of search strings designed to query repositories of both academic and gray literature for recent (since 2015) publications about victim-centered approaches. The search strings were complemented by a series of inclusion and exclusion criteria delimiting the scope of the review. We screened retrieved hits by their titles and abstracts. A uniform approach to screening was ensured by simultaneous screening of a subset of hits by multiple RAND researchers and subsequent consultations.

Figure 1 shows the literature review process described above. We started with 1,357 articles gathered from RAND's librarian. We began by conducting a review of the titles of the articles and removed 870 of the articles based on the relevance of the titles, leaving 487. Next, 197 of the articles were removed based on relevance of the abstracts, leaving 290 to be fully reviewed.

To narrow the scope of the literature search to the most relevant sources, we identified five themes that captured the most published research and the most discussed topics regarding a victim-centered approach. To extract information from included sources, we used a standardized data extraction template in the form of a spreadsheet in which individual rows corresponded to unique sources and individual columns corresponded to various lines of inquiry to be answered by each source.

We identified four themes that crossed the focus areas:

- theme 1: defining a victim-centered approach
- theme 2: victim identification and risk factors
- theme 3: training
- theme 4: law enforcement operations.

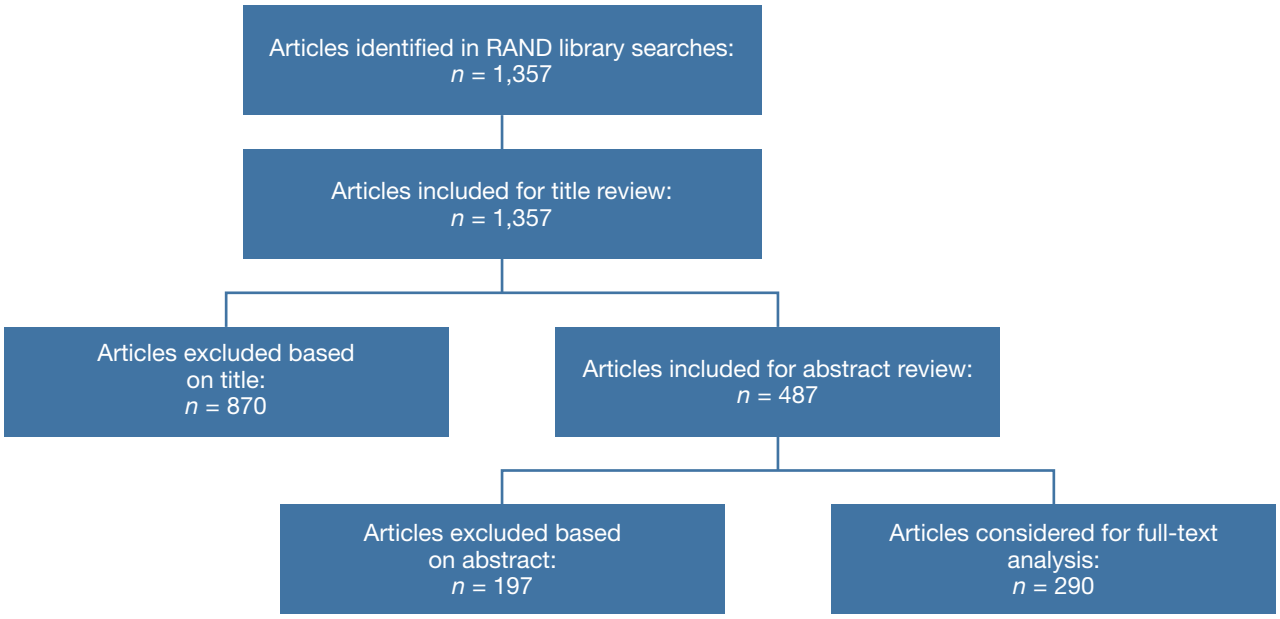
Abbreviations

ACE	adverse childhood experience
CCHT	Center for Countering Human Trafficking
DHS	U.S. Department of Homeland Security
ICE	U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement
PTSD	posttraumatic stress disorder
SAMHSA	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Defining a Victim-Centered Approach

Commonly used terms in the field can be difficult to distinguish and are often used interchangeably, so we define the key terms to be used in this report. *Trauma* can be any "experience that threatens a person's life, safety, or well-being, overwhelming the ability to cope"

FIGURE 1
Literature Selection Process



(Buckingham, 2016, p. 649). It can result from a single event, or a chronic event, or a series of events (Cleary and Hungerford, 2015; Crosby, 2016b), and it can produce "intense emotional pain, fear, or distress, often resulting in long-term physiological and psychosocial consequences" (Bowen and Murshid, 2016, p. 223), which may vary by age, gender, type of trauma, and setting (Bartlett and Steber, 2019).

Human trafficking is an experience that can produce various trauma experiences for a victim-survivor. To be *trauma-informed* is a philosophical stance that understands the potential effects of past trauma on an individual's life, development, behavioral symptoms, mental and physical health, involvement in the criminal justice system, response to service systems, participation in treatment, and more (King et al., 2021; Katz and Haldar, 2016; Sundborg, 2017).

To be *victim-centered* is a related approach and is defined as a "systematic focus on the needs and concerns of victims to ensure the compassionate and sensitive delivery of services in a non-judgmental manner" (Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, 2020, p. 9). *Victim-centered justice* includes recognizing the dignity and equality of victims; focuses on victim recovery, empowerment, and prevention of future abuse; and presents an opportunity for meaningful participation in the justice process (Carroll, 2022; Wemmers, Parent, and Lachance Quirion, 2022).

A victim-centered approach is an overarching framework that affects every step and person within the service system (Goodman et al., 2016). It uses universal design and seeks to create a safe environment for all, regardless of known history with trauma (Katz and Haldar, 2016). It represents a process of organizational change rather than a specific service or set of rules (Sweeney et al., 2018), and it can be applied to any human service provision (Sweeney et al., 2016). The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) uses a Four Rs model for this approach, which has the following steps: realizing the prevalence and impact of trauma, recognizing the signs of trauma, responding by integrating trauma-informed principles into all aspects of service provision or victim contact, and resisting retraumatization (Crosby, 2016a; Marsac et al., 2016; McKenna and Holtfreter, 2021).

SAMHSA also identifies the key principles of trauma-informed care as safety, trustworthiness, peer support, collaboration, choice, and intersectionality, building on a set of principles first developed by Fallot and Harris (Bowen and Murshid, 2016;

Considerations Related to a Victim-Centered Approach

- To implement a victim-centered approach requires organizational change and an overarching framework that affects every step and person within the system.
- Organizational change needs to address the safety of potential victims and DHS personnel.
- A victim-centered approach is situated in a culture of continuous learning and collaboration.

Questions

- Are personnel trained in
  - recognizing that involvement with law enforcement can be retraumatizing?
  - the various impacts of trauma?
  - how indicators of trauma can manifest and what to look for?
  - how and when to refer out to services when needs are identified?
  - how to implement self-care for vicarious trauma in staff?
- How are the key principles of trauma-informed care applied in practice?
- Where can they be developed?

Marsac et al., 2016; McDonald and Middleton, 2019). The principle of *safety* includes promoting a sense of physical, emotional, and psychological safety throughout interactions with victim-survivors and in the physical environment (Kim et al., 2021). *Trustworthiness* includes building and maintaining trust and providing transparency in operations and decisionmaking. *Peer support* is not always included when citing the key principles, but it promotes hope and trust-building by encouraging support networks of others who have experienced trauma and family members (Kim et al., 2021). *Collaboration* represents engaging in active partnerships with victim-survivors, recognizing their individual expertise, and collaborating between other service providers or agencies to coordinate cases. *Choice and empowerment* are sometimes separated as distinct principles, but together they represent sharing power with victim-survivors, recognizing their individual strengths and experiences as instrumental in the healing process, and providing and emphasizing bodily autonomy (Kim et al., 2021; Tibbitts et al., 2021). *Intersectionality* is having contextual, historical, and cultural awareness, including an awareness of identity characteristics across dimensions (e.g., race, gender, ability, sexual orientation) and a recognition of the privileges or added stressors that individuals can incur (Lanphier, 2021). Constant exposure to discrimination has been shown to be a significant predictor of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Kim et al., 2021; Seng et al., 2012).

Culturally appropriate trauma-informed support is a strengths-based approach that understands and responds to the impact of trauma and the role of culture (Ballard-Kang, 2020). This approach may include developing appropriate treatment approaches with a person's native culture, language, and preferences in mind and understanding that culture may affect a person's willingness to seek help and receive support (Im et al., 2021).

Trauma-informed care is the understanding of how past trauma can affect all aspects of an individual's life, and the victim-centered approach is the actual implementation of that understanding when focusing on the needs of and services for victims.

The Influence of Trauma on Victim Identification

According to the literature review, there is limited research in peer-reviewed articles and gray literature on how to improve victim identification and screening for human trafficking in a law enforcement setting. Most victim identification screening tools are implemented in clinical settings by clinical providers or social workers. In one study, researchers looked at how an emergency department in a South Texas border hospital identifies potential victims of human trafficking (Dols et al., 2019). Although the emergency department screened only for abuse and not for human trafficking, hospital staff explained that they observed children's "physical appearance, behavior, body language, and eye contact" and "suspicious events and history" to decide whether a situation called for police involvement (Dols et al., 2019,

pp. 627–628). The emergency department took an informal approach to victim identification and refrained from labeling patients as "human trafficking victims" (Dols et al., 2019).

Because of a lack of nonclinical victim identification screening tools, the best course of action for DHS law enforcement would be to (1) take an informal approach to screening and (2) prioritize the identification of trauma symptoms during law enforcement's brief interactions with potential victims. Therefore, understanding the risk factors, understanding how an individual's exposure to trauma affects cognition, and recognizing common symptoms of trauma can inform agents in their daily work.

Recognizing Trauma

Individuals who experience trauma in their youth are at greater risk of having poorer mental and physical health outcomes. Exposure to trauma as a child is considered an adverse childhood experience (ACE) that could involve "sexual, physical, emotional and psychological abuse; physical and emotional neglect; household substance abuse, and domestic violence" (King et al., 2021, p. 2659). Victims of childhood sexual abuse also have a greater likelihood of "sexual revictimization in adulthood" (Gregory et al., 2021; Ports, Ford, and Merrick, 2016). Experiencing trauma as a child can also lead to "increased lifelong risk of tobacco use, alcohol and drug abuse, depression, suicide attempts, obesity, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, and early mortality" over their lifetime (King et al., 2021, p. 2659).

Furthermore, exposure to trauma affects "emotion regulation and executive functioning" in addition to the ability to retain information and pay attention (Mendelson et al., 2015). Victims who experience trauma can develop a "reactive attachment disorder, disinhibited social engagement disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), acute stress, and/or adjustment disorder" (Brunzell, Stokes, and Waters, 2016, p. 64). However, the most common emotional responses to trauma include distressing emotions, numbness, disbelief, flashbacks, intrusive memories, hypervigilance, increased reactivity, irritability to the environment, and feeling out of control (Shalka, 2015).

Child victims of trauma experience short-term and long-term symptoms. For short-term symptoms, children could exhibit "generalized anxiety, sleeplessness, nightmares, difficulty concentrating, high activity levels, increased aggression, and worry about safety" (Bryson et al., 2017). Long-term symptoms could emerge during adolescence or adulthood and involve experiences of "major depression, suicide, substance abuse, physical health problems, problems in school, and behaviors which result in incarceration" (Bryson et al., 2017). Because ACEs alter how the brain responds to stimuli, victims are prone to being in a constant hypervigilant state (Erickson and Harvey, 2023). The amygdala is the area in the brain "responsible for survival," and experiencing trauma makes it difficult for victims to determine whether a situation is threatening (Erickson and Harvey, 2023; Katz and Haldar, 2016). As a result, victims experience difficulties differentiating "between real dangers" and a "memory from a past dangerous situation" (Katz and Haldar, 2016). Victims in this state can experience a *trauma trigger* when an "event, person, or thing" reminds them of past trauma (Pringer and Wagner, 2020, p. 53). This trigger can lead to symptoms of "anxiety, depression, and other posttraumatic stress disorder responses like flashbacks" (Bedera, 2021). Victims can also experience dissociation, such as depersonalization and derealization, after a traumatic event (Flynn, 2022).

Human trafficking and sex trafficking victims can also experience Stockholm syndrome, which involves the victim identifying with the abuser or captor and having "negative feelings toward [the] authorities attempting to rescue them" (Ballucci and Stathakis, 2022, p. 664). These trauma symptoms

Constant exposure to discrimination has been shown to be a significant predictor of posttraumatic stress disorder.

Considerations for the Influence of Trauma on Victim Identification

- Because of DHS personnel's unique position in identifying and screening for potential human trafficking victims, how can each agency and office be prepared?

present a challenge to law enforcement and prosecution because the victim is not inclined "to cooperate in the investigation and prosecution process" (Ballucci and Stathakis, 2022).

Training

Training Goals

Building a workforce capable of using trauma-informed and victim-centered approaches relies on effective training programs to build knowledge, capacity, and skills. Program goals may include raising basic knowledge of prevalence, symptoms, and effects of trauma (Dierkhising and Kerig, 2018); developing a common language around trauma and victimization (Bartlett and Steber, 2019); developing confidence to put trauma-informed concepts into practice (Vaswani and Paul, 2019); and creating a culture of trauma-informed approaches, safety, and collaboration in all aspects of the workplace (Salloum, Choi, and Smith Stover, 2019). Effective training programs can create a workplace with a common understanding of trauma and its effects, trauma-informed and victim-centered approaches, and how these approaches can improve outcomes (Baker et al., 2018; Barto et al., 2018; Dierkhising and Kerig, 2018; Ezell et al., 2018; Kuhn et al., 2019; Lathan et al., 2019).

Key skills to develop through training include avoiding retraumatization, building relationships with survivors, working with a diverse population, conducting effective interviews with survivors, collaborating with other service providers, de-escalation, and handling vicarious trauma. Relationship-building can include engagement with survivors' social support networks and responsiveness to individual identities, including culture, gender, sexual orientation, and ability (Bartlett and Steber, 2019). One study of law enforcement officers found that 40 percent of 429 officers studied said that they felt they were not equipped to interview individuals with disabilities (Rich, 2019). Interviews with survivors may require interviewers to move beyond traditional techniques and undergo specialized training to overcome unconscious bias around victim-blaming and stereotypes (Lathan et al., 2019; Rich, 2019). This effort may also require training in nontraditional methods of behavior modification (Baker et al., 2018) and tools to remain goal-oriented and to respond to challenging situations with understanding, empathy, and calm (Barto et al., 2018). Individuals working with and around victim-survivors also need to build skills to manage vicarious trauma, and training can help cultivate strategies for self-care and management of their own potential trauma histories (Dierkhising and Kerig, 2018; Mersky, Topitzes, and Britz, 2019; Salloum, Choi, and Smith Stover, 2019).

Training Methods

There is a multitude of methods for delivering workplace training for trauma-informed and victim-centered approaches. Because of the subject matter, some methods suggest providing a content advisory and recommendations on how to work through the potentially sensitive material, including taking breaks, setting up access to support resources, and accessing materials with trusted peers (Brown et al., 2021). Single-session programs (Hoysted, Jobson, and Alisic, 2019) and multi-stage programs (Barnett, Yackley, and Licht, 2018; Burge, Tickle, and Moghaddam, 2021; Connell et al., 2019; Damian et al., 2019; Dierkhising and Kerig, 2018; Loomis et al., 2019) over a series of day, weeks, or months have been demonstrated, and it is recommended to schedule any training requirements during regular work hours (Barnett, Yackley, and Licht, 2018). Many programs recommend implementing ongoing education, recertification, or coaching (Bunting et al., 2019; Salloum, Choi, and Smith Stover, 2019), with examples including follow-up refresher or "booster" courses (Ezell et al., 2018; Graves et al., 2019), ongoing reflective practice groups (Barnett, Yackley, and Licht, 2018), and short follow-up texts or emails including reminders about trauma statistics or trauma-informed practices (Beck et al., 2022).

In one example, ongoing training included biweekly individual supervision, monthly group supervision, and ongoing observations of practice to reinforce knowledge and skills (Cattaneo et al., 2021). The train-the-trainer model is particularly popular for trauma-informed approach training, in which champions for the effort can be created and maintained within the organization and continue to provide support and additional or initial training internally (McNamara et al., 2021). This effort could include identifying an internal specialist to lead ongoing reflective practice support groups with relevant staff (Barnett, Yackley, and Licht, 2018), training staff to lead ongoing internal trainings (Baker et al., 2018), or "trauma champions" who connect with other organizations and participate in regional networks to share resources and methods (Connell et al., 2019). Leaders may be chosen from organization leadership, or staff at all levels may become mentors in the trauma-informed training program (Hales et al., 2019).

Training Content

During the training program, alternatives to standard lectures can be valuable to encourage participation and skill retention. Collaboration between attendees is a strategy used to build trust and empowerment. Developing trust within the training group and establishing confidentiality within sessions can encourage attendees to be open and honest with the experiences and feelings brought up during training (Rye, Anderson, and Pickard, 2021). Holding small-group breakout sessions throughout the course and allowing subgroups to determine their objectives and priorities for after the training can be used to bring forward accountability and tangible action steps (Brown et al., 2021; Goad, 2022). Opportunities for (1) providing and receiving peer feedback, (2) asking questions, and (3) sharing concerns, ideas, resources, and experiences can engage participants more actively than one-way training delivery from an instructor (Pataky, Creswell Baez, and Renshaw, 2019; Weida, Egan, and Chilton, 2021). One suggestion for effectively moving participants from training to practice is to have each participant close the training by committing to one small, specific trauma-informed change in their individual roles (Loomis et al., 2019). This effort can also be done more formally by signing a memorandum of understanding, including any upcoming policy changes and expectations for implementation at the organization level (Damian et al., 2019). Another strategy to overcome implementation barriers after training is working with other agencies that are already on track with implementation (Santos, Chakoian-Lifvergren, and Sethi, 2020). During training, one program—known as the Breakthrough Series Collaborative—used phased sessions, in which each learning session was followed by an action period over a few days during which small changes were tested in action and data were brought back to the next learning session to evaluate (Douglass, Chickerella, and Maroney, 2021). The Theory of Planned Behavior can also be applied to encourage implementation of the training curriculum by presenting research to correct existing myths, including testimonials from relevant experts and organizations, and promoting perception of personal control over changes to practice (Abdul-Adil and Suárez, 2022).

Alternatives to standard lectures can be valuable to encourage participation and skill retention.

According to the definition of the trauma-informed approach, it is important for staff at all levels and degrees of interaction with victims to receive some form of training (Baker et al., 2018), and it can be helpful to work with staff and leaders to identify workplace needs and integrate those into the training program (Barnett, Yackley, and Licht, 2018). Leadership or cross-role teams including distributed levels of employees can hold a dedicated series of meetings to generate a plan to shift policies, procedures, and practices within the organization following initial training (Baker et al., 2018; Doug-

lass, Chickerella, and Maroney, 2021). To achieve a cultural shift, it is important for leadership to demonstrate support for the approach and for the needs and well-being of staff (Bunting et al., 2019). It is also recommended to include someone with lived experience of relevant traumatization in the training team. Communities Healing and Transforming Trauma has a speakers' bureau modeled after the Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network speakers' bureau, which provides support and training to survivors who elect to be hired for speaking events about their experiences to help other survivors and to educate community and service providers (Fields et al., 2020).

Evaluations of Training

Although many trauma-informed training programs have not undergone formal evaluation, some have demonstrated measurable success in skill and knowledge development and in survivor outcomes (Bajwa et al., 2020; Smyth, Johnstone, and Rogin, 2021). Significant funding from SAMHSA has gone toward trauma-informed care training nationwide, but no formal evaluation has been done on the effectiveness of these SAMHSA-funded programs (Damian et al., 2019). Other training programs have undergone evaluation, and one review of evaluations found nine training initiatives that used quantitative pre-test and post-test designs to evaluate training outcomes, with a few others using qualitative methods or a combination (Bunting et al., 2019). They reported that "all studies reported increased staff knowledge, awareness and/or confidence in trauma-informed principles and practice that were retained over time," although the evaluations were based on self-reporting methods without independent practice observation (Bunting et al., 2019). In another overview of 23 training evaluations, methods included single group pre-test/post-test, randomized control, and quasi-experimental design with an intervention group and a nonrandomized control group (Purtle, 2020). The author observed that 12 of 14 studies that assessed effects of trauma-informed organizational intervention on staff knowledge, attitudes, or behaviors found statistically significant improvement in one or more of these outcomes. Seven of nine studies that assessed these outcomes after at least a month observed that these improvements were retained, and five of the eight studies that assessed effects on client outcomes found statistically significant improvement for one or more client outcomes, most using administrative data (Purtle, 2020). A National Institute of Justice report mentions a training program that reaches Denver Police Academy and Denver County Sheriff's Office recruits that has consistently resulted in tips about human trafficking situations (Mullin, 2020). Other methods to evaluate training programs include the Attitudes Related to Trauma-Informed Care (ARTIC) scale (Champine et al., 2022), Evidence-Based Practice Attitudes Scale (EBPAS), Trauma-Informed System Change Instrument (TISCI), and Trauma Readiness Tool (Bunting et al., 2019). For more examples of programs in practice, with evaluation findings if available, see Appendix B.

Considerations for Training

- Does the existing training curriculum model training programs that build knowledge, capacity, and skills?
- How can organizations include, adapt, or modify existing training to include in overall findings in this report?
- Are there limitations that hinder the implementation?
- Do existing practices, trainings, and policies within DHS meet the victim-centered principles?
- Do trainings need to be evaluated specific to DHS law enforcement?

Law Enforcement Operations

As discussed in the "Defining a Victim-Centered Approach" section, a *victim-centered approach* is an overarching framework that represents a process of organizational change rather than a specific service or set of rules. We also presented the guiding key principles outlined by SAMHSA as safety, trustworthiness, collaboration, choice, and intersectionality. In this section, we will discuss operations related to a victim-centered approach organized around those principles. Similar to victim identification, there is limited research in peer-reviewed articles and gray literature on how to apply these principles to federal law enforcement. In addition, the applications of a victim-centered approach, described below, have mostly been implemented in clinical settings by clinical providers or social workers.

Generally speaking, the depth of knowledge about human trafficking, including prevalence rates, successful intervention methods, and predictors of victimization and desistance, make operationalizing an evidence-based victim-centered approach difficult. However, according to the literature review, individual police agencies and service agencies are prioritizing some operations that can possibly be adopted and adapted to a federal law enforcement setting. These operations will be discussed below.

Establishing a Perception of Safety Can Include Physical Measures and Rapport-Building

Establishing various safety operations is crucial for law enforcement agencies to effectively support and assist victims. Using a victim-centered approach focuses on the prioritization of the well-being and safety of the victims. This effort can be achieved by physical safety, such as the built environment (e.g., gates and locks on the doors) and the structure of human resources and housing staff (e.g., staff on call around the clock).

Safety can also be promoted through establishing a rapport between a law enforcement officer and a victim that can help a victim feel safe. This step can be done through an initial brief phone conversation in which introductions can be made and a description of the case processing system is shared. In the social work field, initial assessments can be helpful to get to know a young person before talking about the problems and concerns that bring them to meet with the professional. Asking questions about their interests, skills, and abilities and who is important to them provides young people with a relational experience and context where they are seen to matter and that they are more than the sum of their problems. Another suggestion is to allow young people to bring a stuffed animal or other object of comfort to help them feel comfortable and relaxed. Although this is not a law enforcement setting, there are practices that can be adapted to support and assist victims.

Individual police agencies and service agencies are prioritizing some operations that can possibly be adopted and adapted to a federal law enforcement setting.

Establishing Trust with Law Enforcement Depends on Managing Victims' Expectations and Treating Them with Dignity

Somewhat related, establishing trust with trafficking victims is also crucial for law enforcement agencies. One way to establish trust is to have a clear protocol that can be explained to victims so they know what to expect and not to deviate from the protocol. Very few jurisdictions have a clear protocol on the processing of human trafficking cases or have specialized units dedicated to the investigation of suspected cases

Consideration for Priority Areas in Law Enforcement Operations

- Can organizations identify what is possible in existing operations to meet these priority areas?

(Farrell, McDevitt, and Fahy, 2010). This is a clear gap in both operations and research.

Building trust also requires treating victims with empathy, respect, and dignity. The training of law enforcement, as discussed earlier, helps agents understand the impact of trauma and that recognizing trauma signs is important when investigating human trafficking cases. Promising practices include investing time in building rapport and developing a relationship of trust with victims. These practices should include active listening, mirroring the word choice of victims, emphatic communication, and an understanding of the victims' experiences. These options may include multiple contacts to build that relationship.

Choice and Empowerment

Agencies can empower trafficking victims in various ways, including providing them with resources and support. This effort can include referrals to services, but law enforcement agencies may provide victims with information about their rights, available legal resources (i.e., immigration options), and the legal process. This information helps victims understand their options and make informed decisions about their future. Another aspect of this principle is for victims to feel empowered and establish their own agency in the process. A key step is for investigators to not rely on victim testimony and, instead, work with the victim to build a case but understand that it cannot be victim-based. A victim-centered approach views a victim as someone with a vested interest and stresses equality in the process.

Collaboration

Law enforcement may collaborate with victim advocates or support service providers who have specialized knowledge and experience in assisting trafficking victims. These professionals can help build trust by providing emotional support, explaining legal processes, and connecting victims with necessary services, such as safe housing, counseling services, medical care, or job training programs. Many local law enforcement agencies have established multidisciplinary teams. These teams provide access to victim advocates to serve as a bridge to care and services. In multiple studies, participants asserted that the availability of and access to their advocates was important to both establishing rapport and getting their service needs met. Consistent, on-request availability provides survivors the opportunity to reach out to advocates as issues arise and facilitates feeling supported.

Intersectionality

Through a victim-centered approach in training, law enforcement personnel can educate themselves on myths and stereotypes about victim behavior and the backgrounds and unique challenges faced by trafficking victims from different communities, including cultural differences and language barriers. This training can lead to approaching victims with cultural sensitivity by acknowledging cultural norms, beliefs, and languages. This understanding and rapport-building will support victims in sharing their stories.

Conclusion and Next Steps

We conducted a literature review to build a baseline of knowledge of what is known about implementing a victim-centered approach, which policies may hinder or promote a victim-centered approach, and what types of training and programming can assist law enforcement.

Limitations

Overall, the literature review indicated that there is limited research in peer-reviewed articles and gray literature on a victim-centered approach and how to apply the approach in a federal law enforcement setting. Most of the research is in local law enforce-

ment settings or in clinical settings. The literature review did not find existing research on victim-centered policy. Although there was information on programming and training, it was not specifically evaluated for federal law enforcement. That being said, although information presented on training, identification, and operations has not been evaluated enough to have clear best or evidence-based practice recommendations, there are key suggestions that can inform agents in their daily work.

Next Steps

This report provides information on what is already known, and the next step is to apply these lessons to the unique needs of DHS personnel. A key first step will be to understand whether current practices, trainings, and policies within DHS meet the victim-centered principles. At the end of each main section, we outlined several considerations to move forward in ensuring that a victim-centered approach is considered across DHS.

Summary of Considerations

Creating a victim-centered approach

- Implementation of a victim-centered approach requires organizational change and an overarching framework that affects every step and person within the system.
- This organizational change needs to address the safety of potential victims and DHS personnel.
- A victim-centered approach is situated in a culture of continuous learning and collaboration.

Questions

- Are personnel trained on
  - recognizing that involvement with law enforcement can be retraumatizing?
  - the varying impacts of trauma?
  - how indicators of trauma can manifest and what to look for?
  - how and when to refer out to services when needs are identified?
  - how to implement self-care for vicarious trauma in staff?
- How are the key principles of trauma-informed care applied in practice?
- Where can the key principles be developed?

Victim identification

- Because of DHS personnel's unique position in identifying and screening for potential human trafficking victims, how can each agency and office be prepared?

Training

- Does the existing training curriculum model training programs that build knowledge, capacity, and skills?
- How can organizations include, adapt, or modify existing training to include the overall findings in this report?
- Are there limitations that hinder the implementation?
- Do existing practices, trainings, and policies within DHS meet the victim-centered principles?
- Do trainings need to be evaluated specific to DHS law enforcement?

Operations

- Can organizations identify what is possible in existing operations?

APPENDIX A

Search Strategy

Objective

Through analysis of peer-reviewed and gray literature, characterize what research exists on what is already known about victim-centered approach, in particular what policies may hinder or promote a victim-centered approach, and what training and programming can assist law enforcement research.

Research questions

1. What are agencies doing to implement a victim-centered approach?
2. What is the evidence on various policies, training, and programming related to the use of a victim-centered approach?

Databases searched: complex search strategies

- Academic Search Complete
- Business Source Complete
- Criminal Justice Abstracts
- Foreign Legal
- HeinOnline Law Journal Library
- Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals
- National Criminal Justice Reference Services (EBSCO)
- PAIS
- Policy File Index
- Scopus
- Social Science Abstracts
- Sociological Abstracts
- Web of Science

Databases searched: simple search strategies

- Google Scholar
- OAIster
- Advanced Google searches targeting relevant websites
  - World Bank
  - Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
  - Polaris

Inclusion criteria

- Only sources in English will be included.
- Dissertations, theses, magazine, and newspaper sources will be included.
- Only publications since 2015 will be included.
- Nonempirical sources will be included.
- Both U.S. and international sources will be included.

Search terms

("victim centered" OR "victim-centered" OR "victim-centric" OR "victim centric" OR "victim driven" OR "victim-driven" OR "trauma-informed" OR "trauma informed" OR "survivor-centered" OR "survivor centered" OR "survivor informed" OR "survivor-informed" OR "victim-survivor" OR victimolog* OR "victim identif*" "OR "woman-centered" OR "woman centered")

AND (policy OR program* OR interven* OR practice OR initiative OR service* OR approach* evidence OR data OR information OR proof OR knowledge OR model OR strategy OR care OR lens)

AND (reduc* OR avoid* OR prevent* OR mitigat* OR address* OR tackl* OR resolv* OR investigat* OR minimiz* OR punish* OR prosecut* OR remed* OR restor* OR support* OR protect* OR advoca*)

APPENDIX B

Training Resources

Table B.1 shows examples of programs in practice, with evaluation findings, if available.

TABLE B.1

Examples of Programs in Practice

Program Name	Brief Description and Findings, If Available
TIS101	More than 6,000 employees were trained in three years using early adopters, monthly trainings across multiple sites, and registration within employee orientation (Loomis et al., 2019).
University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee	Trauma-informed care certificate program in department of social work (Mersky, Topitzes, and Britz, 2019).
Michigan Children's Trauma Assessment Centre	Called "one of the most comprehensive training strategies"; includes training developed and delivered for specific groups (e.g., schools, child welfare professionals, medical personnel) (Bunting et al., 2019).
Connecticut Collaborative on Effective Practices for Trauma (CONCEPT)	Quarterly self-care trainings led by worker wellness teams (Bunting et al., 2019).
National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)	Established by Congress in 2000, it has three types of centers (Walsh, Conradi, and Pauter, 2019): • The National Center for Child Traumatic Stress (NCCTS) provides structure, technical assistance, and coordination. • Treatment and Services Adaptation (TSA) Centers provide expertise on trauma, population groups, and effective treatment approaches. • Community Treatment and Services Centers (CTS) implement and evaluate treatment and services in communities.
Start Believing Campaign	Created by End Violence Against Women International and "encourages officers to begin with an assumption that people reporting rape are truthful" (Rich, 2019).
Sanctuary Model	"[T]rauma-informed approach to system-wide change that focuses on creating a more therapeutic and supportive organizational culture." Two studies evaluated Sanctuary Model effectiveness in a juvenile justice setting: One found a decrease in assaults between youth, use of confinement, and use of restraints, and the other found an increase in open communication between youth and staff (Baetz et al., 2021).
Risking Connections (RC)	Program evaluation suggested that RC produces favorable change in knowledge gain and attitudes toward trauma-informed care by staff, benefits to staff wellness, and measured improvements in client outcomes measured through coping strategies and sense of control (Healey, 2020).
Building Wealth and Health Network	Training curriculum that includes trauma-informed peer support and financial empowerment education. Evaluation demonstrated improvement in client outcomes including depressive symptoms, coping strategies, employment, and income (Weida, Egan, and Chilton, 2021).
Crisis Intervention Team (CIT)	Comparing officers who had been trained in CIT with those who had not been trained: CIT-trained officers were found to be more likely to make referrals, follow up with doctors and caseworkers, and provide information on resources; they were less likely to use force and more likely to use de-escalation (Freeze, 2021).
Trauma Informed-Simulation Based Training (TI-SBT)	This one-day training program starts with interactive lectures and ends with three immersive simulations and debriefs (Zordan et al., 2022). Promoting Excellence and Reflective Learning in Simulation (PEARLS) framework is used within TI-SBT to facilitate debrief sessions (Zordan et al., 2022).
Trust-Based Relational Intervention	Train-the-trainer model for trauma-informed care given by practitioners to social workers who then gave the training to caregivers (Hunsley et al., 2022).
Cross-Cultural Trauma-Informed Care	Training program specific to working with refugee populations and understanding intersections of trauma and culture (Ritblatt and Hokoda, 2022).

Additional resources can be found below:

- National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors' webinars and trainings provide consulting services; topics include organizational change, workforce skill building for trauma-informed care, screening, and care management.
  - To access, visit National Council for Mental Wellbeing, "Consulting Services," webpage, undated. As of August 29, 2023: https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/our-work/consulting-training/consulting-services/
- The National Child Traumatic Stress Network's trauma-informed care resources provide online training platform for free with registration and connections to in-person training options.
  - To access, visit National Child Traumatic Stress Network, "Trauma-Informed Care," webpage, undated. As of August 29, 2023: https://www.nctsn.org/trauma-informed-care
- SAMHSA's GAINS Center Trauma Training for Criminal Justice Professionals provides trainings available via local trainers or train-the-trainer programs; topics include the impact of trauma and trauma-informed responses.
  - To access, visit SAMHSA, "Training Opportunities," webpage, last updated November 2022. As of August 29, 2023: https://www.samhsa.gov/gains-center/trauma-training-criminal-justice-professionals/training-opportunities
- Wellpoint Care Network (formerly SaintA) provides training programs for trauma-informed care and practice for audiences, such as law enforcement.
  - To access, visit Wellpoint Care Network, "Trauma Informed Care in Both Theory and Practice," webpage, undated. As of August 29, 2023: https://wellpointcare.org/services/training-consulting
- Communities Healing and Transforming Trauma (CHATT) Speakers' Bureau describes itself as "a circle of survivors who use their voices and stories to uplift other survivors and educate service providers, students, legislators, and many more about the impact of trauma on individuals, families, and communities."
  - To access, visit University of California, Division of Trauma Recovery Services, "Communities Healing and Transforming Trauma (CHATT)," webpage, undated. As of August 29, 2023: https://divisionoftraumarecoveryservices.org/trauma-recovery-center/communities-healing-and-transforming-trauma-chatt/
- The Veterans Health Administration YouTube channel provides videos on recognizing PTSD, responding to trauma disclosures, and cognitive impairment and PTSD.
  - To access, visit Veterans Health Administration, "Recognizing Trauma and Symptoms of PTSD," YouTube, November 17, 2020. As of August 29, 2023: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPMBtOZ6vUA
  - To access, visit Veterans Health Administration, "Responding to Trauma Disclosures," YouTube, November 17, 2020. As of August 29, 2023: https://www.youtube.com/
  - watch?v=VXBA9epUqqE
  - To access, visit Veterans Health Administration, "Cognitive Impairment and PTSD," YouTube, November 17, 2020. As of August 29, 2023: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tc_lSzjuVvo
- TIC Training Center provides individual and organizational training and certification, all centered around trauma-informed care.
  - To access, visit TIC Training Center, homepage, undated. As of August 29, 2023: https://traumainformedcaretraining.com/

APPENDIX C

Additional Resources

Although the following sources were not reviewed as part of our literature review, they represent available guides, products, and tools developed by various U.S. government, international, and other relevant agencies. This appendix provides a list of these products or services provided by these organizations and agencies that have developed resources for implementing victim-centered, trauma-informed approaches for human trafficking contexts.

Government Resources

- The Attorney General publishes an annual report to Congress providing a detailed overview of efforts within the U.S. government to combat trafficking during the report year.
  - To access the most recent publication, visit U.S. Department of Justice, *Attorney General's Annual Report to Congress on U.S. Government Activities to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Fiscal Year 2021*, April 2023. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.justice.gov/d9/2023-04/AG%20HT%20Report%20FY21FINALPDF.pdf
  - Highlights in victim services from the fiscal year 2021 report include the following:
    - Department of Justice funding for research
    - Federal Bureau of Investigation victim specialists
    - Department of Justice, Office for Victims of Crime funding to victim service providers
    - Department of Health and Human Services eligibility letters for foreign nationals who experienced human trafficking and qualify for federally funded benefits
    - Office on Trafficking in Persons case management and support services for U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, and foreign nationals
    - DHS efforts on victim identification
    - U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services relief to human trafficking victims
    - Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons provision of victim services
    - Department of State, Diplomatic Security Service victim outreach, both overseas and domestic
    - U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission's processing of employment discrimination cases with indicators of human trafficking.
- The Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Trafficking in Persons develops standards of care, strategies, and policies for victim service providers, advises the Assistant Secretary, and contributes to relevant government reports.
  - To access, visit Department of Health and Human Services, Office on Trafficking in Persons, "Administration for Children & Families: OTIP Fact Sheet," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.acf.hhs.gov/otip/comms-fact-sheet/office-trafficking-persons-fact-sheet
- Contributions from the Department of Health and Human Services' Office on Trafficking in Persons include the *Federal Strategic Action Plan on Services to Victims of Human Trafficking in the United States*.
  - This report was developed by the Department of Justice, the Department of Health and Human Services, and DHS. It was released as a five-year plan in 2014, followed by a status report released in 2019.
  - To access the 2014 report, visit Department of Justice, *Federal Strategic Action Plan on Services for Victims of Human Trafficking in the United States, 2013–2017*, 2014. As of July 8, 2024: https://ovc.ojp.gov/sites/g/files/xyckuh226/files/media/document/FederalHumanTraffickingStrategicPlan.pdf
  - To access the 2017 status report, visit Department of Justice, *Federal Strategic Action Plan on Services for Victims of*

Human Trafficking in the United States: Fiscal Year 2017 Status Report, 2019. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/publications/blue-campaign/19_0419_bc_final-consolidated-fy17-sap-status-report.pdf
    - The goals of this annual report include aligning efforts for victim services, including promoting collaboration and providing federal direction; expanding research efforts; expanding service provision and training for service providers; and promoting trauma-informed, culturally informed services.
- Contributions from the Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons include the following:
  - *Trafficking in Persons Report*
    - This report from the Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons provides an overview of human trafficking around the world, including survivor stories, current tools to fight human trafficking, and recommendations.
    - To access this report, both the most current and past versions, visit U.S. Department of State, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, "Trafficking in Persons Report," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.state.gov/trafficking-in-persons-report/
- The Department of Justice has several offices and bureaus that provide relevant training, funding, technical assistance, and publications. It released its *National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking* report in 2022 in alignment with the National Action Plan, released by the White House in 2021.
  - This strategy highlights priorities, initiatives, and collaborations in the U.S. federal government's anti-trafficking efforts, both within the Department of Justice and in collaboration with other federal agencies.
  - To access, visit U.S. Department of Justice, *National Strategy to Combat Human Trafficking*, January 2022. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.justice.gov/opa/press-release/file/1467431/dl
- The Department of Justice's Office for Victims of Crime provides support for victim service providers through trainings and publications, including the following:
  - The Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center provides training to service providers, offers technical support, and works with attorneys to improve victim assistance.
    - To access, visit Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center, homepage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.ovcttac.gov/
  - The center, along with the Bureau of Justice Assistance, developed a Task Force e-Guide to provide assistance, support, and guidance for existing task forces and for the formation of new task forces. The e-guide includes a section on supporting victims, recommending that a skilled provider will recognize some survivor behaviors as trauma responses; have knowledge about the impacts of violence, particularly sexual violence, on mental health and substance abuse; and be culturally competent and responsive to emergency mental health needs.
    - The Task Force e-Guide also provides a list of resources, including a module on trauma-informed care.
    - To access, visit Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center, "Victim Assistance Training Online," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.ovcttac.gov/views/TrainingMaterials/dspOnline_VATOnline.cfm?nm=wbt&ns=ot&nt=vat
    - The center also features a five-part interactive online training module that includes content on trauma-informed

and victim-centered approaches to human trafficking; to access, visit Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center, "Understanding Human Trafficking," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.ovcttac.gov/UnderstandingHumanTrafficking/index.cfm?nm=wbt&ns=ot&nt=ht
    - SOAR Online, self-paced continuing education and continuing medical education training modules targeted at educating health and social workers across broad disciplines, is provided by the Postgraduate Institute for Medicine and the Department of Health and Human Services; to access, visit Office on Trafficking in Persons, "SOAR Online," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://nhttac.acf.hhs.gov/soar/soar-for-individuals/soar-online
- *Trauma-Informed Practice in the Field: Recommendations for Human Trafficking Service Providers* was published in October 2021 with recommendations following a 2019 state of the field report.
    - To access, visit Kaitie Chakoian, Resham Sethi, and Jessica Santos, *Trauma-Informed Practice in the Field: Recommendations for Human Trafficking Service Providers*, Brandeis University, Institute for Economic and Racial Equity, October 2021. As of July 8, 2024: https://heller.brandeis.edu/iere/pdfs/racial-wealth-equity/immigrant-integration/trauma-informed-practice-in-the-field-1.pdf
    - To access, visit Office for Victims of Crime, *Trauma-Informed Care for Survivors of Human Trafficking: A State of the Field in 2019*, 2020. As of July 8, 2024: https://ovc.ojp.gov/library/publications/trauma-informed-care-survivors-human-trafficking-state-field-2019
    - The goals of the report were to provide implementation guidance for trauma-informed practice and to describe the resources and support needed to become more trauma-informed from the 2019 national survey of 157 providers. Key findings include the following:
        - Many well-intentioned practices (e.g., requiring certain behaviors, such as being sober or cutting contact with a trafficker to access basic needs and services) can limit autonomy and replicate exploitation.
        - It is important to acknowledge that survivors are best equipped to make decisions for their safety, and harm reduction practices can be used to provide support even when those decisions that are not in alignment with the service provider's wishes.
        - A requirement for effective trauma-informed practice is to have a representative and culturally responsive workforce.
        - Community partnerships with cultural institutions can help bridge existing gaps.
        - Often, there is limited staffing within an organization dedicated to human trafficking, including in law enforcement (where only a small segment of overall cases are human trafficking cases). This factor can lead to burnout, isolation, and job turnover, but keeping individuals connected to others working in this area outside their organization could help.
        - In particular, individuals working on labor trafficking cases may have a harder time because there is less awareness of and interest in the area.
- The Office for Victims of Crime offers a video training series on human trafficking task force protocol.
    - To access, visit Office for Victims of Crime, "Human Trafficking Task Force Protocol Development Training Video Series," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://ovc.ojp.gov/library/publications/human-trafficking-task-force-protocol-development-training-video-series

  - To access supplemental materials, including human trafficking task force protocol development checklists, visit International Association of Police Chiefs, "Enhanced Collaborative Model (ECM) Anti-Human Trafficking Task Force Protocol Development Checklists," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.theiacp.org/resources/document/enhanced-collaborative-model-ecm-anti-human-trafficking-task-force-protocol
  - Information-sharing is crucial for successful partnerships between entities (law enforcement, prosecution, victim services); creating a clearly defined protocol will make this process more streamlined and secure, and decisions will be better informed across the board.
- The Office for Victims of Crime, Human Trafficking Collective provides training and technical assistance in funding recipients of grants from the Office for Victims of Crimes and maintains a distribution list with updates on trainings.
  - To access, visit Office for Victims of Crime, Human Trafficking Collective, homepage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://ovchtc.com/
- The Human Trafficking Capacity Building Center provides free coaching and mentoring and a resource library for organizations and federally recognized tribes.
  - To access, visit Office for Victims of Crime, "Human Trafficking Capacity Building Center," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://ovc.ojp.gov/taxonomy/term/human-trafficking-capacity-building-center-0
- A 2023 report sponsored by the Office for Victims of Crime aims to understand why victims of human trafficking do not report or disclose victimization.
  - To access, visit M. Kristen Hefner and Leslie B. Hill, "Naming, Blaming, and Claiming: Understanding Human Trafficking Victims' Nondisclosure and Non-Reporting Behavior," *Journal of Human Trafficking*, November 2023. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/23322705.2023.2281212
  - The research findings included
    - barriers at each stage (e.g., naming, blaming, claiming)
    - training in victim-centered approaches to help alleviate victim-blaming and stereotyping by law enforcement
    - strengthened law enforcement resources to identify victimization and human trafficking—multidisciplinary team response rather than relying on law enforcement alone.
- The Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance has published guidance on multidisciplinary anti–human trafficking forces and curricula for trauma-informed approaches.
  - Erin Albright of Project Roadmap, with feedback from several existing U.S. task forces, developed a multidisciplinary anti–human trafficking task force.
    - To access, visit Erin Albright, "Multidisciplinary Collaborative Model for Anti-Human Trafficking Task Forces: Development and Operational Roadmap," International Association of Chiefs of Police, Bureau of Justice Assistance, Office for Victims of Crime Training and Technical Assistance Center, Office for Victims of Crime, June 2020. As of July 8, 2024: https://bja.ojp.gov/library/publications/multidisciplinary-collaborative-model-anti-human-trafficking-task-forces
- The Bureau of Justice Assistance has a training curriculum for trauma-informed approaches in residential substance abuse treatment facilities.
  - This curriculum begins with an introduction on how to best conduct the training,

emphasizing the importance of implementing trauma-informed approaches while delivering the training.
  - To access, visit Bureau of Justice Assistance, "Residential Substance Abuse Treatment (RSAT) Training and Technical Assistance: Introduction to Trauma and Trauma-Informed Approaches for RSAT Staff," April 26, 2019. As of July 8, 2024: https://bja.ojp.gov/library/publications/introduction-trauma-and-trauma-informed-approaches-rsat-staff
- The Office of Justice Programs is the grant-making component of the Justice Department and provides grant funding, training, and technical assistance to victim service providers.
  - The Office of Justice Programs website hosts relevant Justice Department research and publications from various sponsors.
  - To access, visit Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, "Publications List," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.ojp.gov/library/publications/list
- The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention supports victim service providers and programs that focus on children and youth, including those who have been victims of commercial sexual exploitation.
  - To access, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, "Working for Youth Justice and Safety," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://ojjdp.ojp.gov/
- The Department of Justice's National Institute of Justice funds research to better measure human trafficking; prevent trafficking; better identify, investigate, and prosecute traffickers; improve victim services; and identify best practices. National Institute of Justice–funded research produces publications on victim-centered, trauma-informed practices, including the following:
  - The National Institute of Justice website has featured articles on human trafficking, including a June 2023 article on findings from ongoing research.
  - To access, visit National Institute of Justice, "Evaluating Victim Services Text and Chat Hotlines: Technology Helps Reach Underserved Populations," June 16, 2023. As of July 8, 2024: https://nij.ojp.gov/topics/articles/evaluating-victim-services-text-and-chat-hotlines-technology-helps-reach-underserved-populations
- The Urban Institute provides an evaluation of the Enhanced Collaborative Model Task Force to Combat Human Trafficking, a program funded by the Office for Victims of Crime and the Bureau of Justice Assistance.
  - To access, visit Krista White, Paige Thompson, Evelyn F. McCoy, Jeanette Hussemann, William Adams, and Roderick Taylor, *Collaboration and Challenges in Antitrafficking Task Forces: Lessons Learned from the Enhanced Collaborative Model Task Forces to Combat Human Trafficking*, Urban Institute, June 2022. As of July 8, 2024: https://nij.ojp.gov/library/publications/collaboration-and-challenges-antitrafficking-task-forces-lessons-learned
- Work by the Urban Institute released in 2018 is tailored to a practitioner audience and is based on interviews with sex and labor trafficking survivors and human trafficking stakeholders at eight U.S. sites.
  - To access, visit Evelyn McCoy, Colleen Owens, Lilly Yu, Hanna Love, and Jeanette Hussemann, *Delivering Justice for Human Trafficking Survivors: Implications for Practice*, Urban Institute, March 2018. As of July 8, 2024: https://nij.ojp.gov/library/publications/delivering-justice-human-trafficking-survivors-implications-practice
  - Recommendations were presented for building justice into the criminal justice process, including the following
    - allow survivors to share their stories and listen

        - maintain one consistent point of contact instead of having survivors work between many moving parts
        - use the language survivors use in their own stories
        - focus on long-term needs of survivors
        - provide decisionmaking power to survivors about their own futures
        - provide reassurance that the survivor will not be arrested, deported, or criminalized.
    - Recommendations were presented for law enforcement actions, including the following:
        - focus on survivors instead of crimes
        - provide training, including sensitivity training, and build knowledge on what constitutes human trafficking, labor trafficking, and sex trafficking
        - for suspected sex trafficking situations, have a female officer present
        - use a compassionate, trauma-informed approach (e.g., not placing an individual in handcuffs for prostitution)
        - during investigations, provide interpreters for survivors and their family members and friends, as applicable; begin by establishing trust before asking survivors to share their stories; have a victim advocate, case worker, or social worker present during interactions between law enforcement and a survivor; wear nonuniform clothes and remove badges for interviews; and communicate outcomes with survivors throughout the process of the investigation and potential prosecution.
- Research was published in *Justice Quarterly* in 2022 on the use of traditional law enforcement for human trafficking concerns in illicit massage businesses.
    - To access, visit Ieke de Vries and Amy Farrell, "Explaining the Use of Traditional Law Enforcement Responses to Human Trafficking Concerns in Illicit Massage Businesses," *Justice Quarterly*, Vol. 40, No. 3, April 2022. As of July 8, 2024: https://nij.ojp.gov/library/publications/explaining-use-traditional-law-enforcement-responses-human-trafficking
    - The authors describe the following challenges to traditional law enforcement tactics being effective in an illicit massage business setting:
        - Illicit massage businesses are often highly interconnected, so a singular sting operation is likely to miss the larger operation.
        - Prosecution for human trafficking is known to be predominantly unsuccessful, so there is not a strong deterrent for traffickers.
        - Traditional enforcement measures emphasize the crime of prostitution instead of focusing on victim-centered approaches.
    - The authors include the following suggested changes to traditional approaches for the illicit massage business context:
        - Maintain a dedicated human trafficking investigator who can go deeper instead of pursuing one-off shutdowns and arrests.
        - Move toward a victim-centered approach that does not focus on victims as criminals.
        - Bring in other service providers that can facilitate conversations and keep victim well-being and trust at the forefront.
- Research was published in the *Journal of Criminology and Public Policy* in 2019 on the challenges in police responses to human trafficking.
    - To access, visit Amy Farrell, Meredith Dank, Ieke de Vries, Matthew Kafafian, Andrea Hughes, and Sarah Lockwood, "Failing Victims? Challenges of the Police Response to Human Trafficking," *Journal of Criminology and Public Policy*, Vol. 18, No. 3, August 2019. As of July 8, 2024: https://nij.ojp.gov/library/publications/failing-victims-challenges-police-response-human-trafficking
    - The authors' findings include the following:

        - Self-reporting is very uncommon, so there is a need for proactive police action to identify victims and an understanding of what to look for and how to act if a potential victim is identified.
        - Victims are unlikely to disclose information about their victimization early in an interview because of retraumatization, embarrassment, and mistrust of law enforcement.
        - Mismatched goals exist between victims and law enforcement; victims may not be interested in helping facilitate the arrest of their trafficker but may be more interested in back wages, stable housing, and a way forward.
        - They also present recommendations, such as that law enforcement (1) should implement a victim-centered approach in which feedback is collected from victims on their experiences with police interactions and (2) should partner with children's advocacy centers for a forensic interview process to interview minors who may have been subjected to trafficking.
- The National Institute of Justice's series Notes from the Field features insights and findings from various offices across the United States.
    - To access a 2020 Notes from the Field from the Erie County Sheriff's Office, visit Theresa Nietzel, "Notes from the Field: Collaboration Is Key in Human Trafficking Investigations," National Institute of Justice, May 27, 2020. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.ojp.gov/library/publications/notes-field-collaboration-key-human-trafficking-investigations
        - The author reports a lack of dedicated resources for human trafficking investigations as a major obstacle for law enforcement agencies.
        - The author describes remedies, including collaboration with victim service providers and other law enforcement in the area that have (1) experience and expertise in victim-centered approaches and (2) dedicated expertise in different markets where trafficking occurs (e.g., dairy farming).
    - To access a 2020 Notes from the Field from the Denver District Attorney's Office, visit Lara Mullin, "Notes from the Field: Emphasizing a Victim-Centered Approach in Human Trafficking Prosecutions," National Institute of Justice, May 1, 2020. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.ojp.gov/library/publications/notes-field-emphasizing-victim-centered-approach-human-trafficking
        - The author indicates that bringing forward a successful human trafficking case may involve extended and challenging trial participation by the victim.
        - To ease this challenge, the author recommends ensuring that basic needs are met during this time and potentially supporting individuals who have substance use disorders.
        - The suggested approach is to never require the victim to come to court.
        - Another approach from the author is to make sure to have victim advocates, who will focus on the victims' immediate needs and well-being over interrogation, on the scene when any first contact is occurring with potential trafficking victims.
    - To access a 2020 Notes from the Field from the McLennan County Sheriff's Office, visit Joseph M. Scaramucci, "Reducing the Need for Victim Testimony in Human Trafficking Cases," National Institute of Justice, June 25, 2020. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.ojp.gov/library/publications/notes-field-reducing-need-victim-testimony-human-trafficking-cases
        - This office is shifting toward less reliance on information and testimony provided by victims and advises that law enforcement cannot arrest someone and then expect that person to provide testimony.

        - Instead, it is looking to homicide case-building as an example in which there is no ability to talk to victims and have them testify and looking to new forms of evidence, such as cell phones, to help build its cases.
- The U.S. Department of State's Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons supports the U.S. Advisory Council on Human Trafficking. The council consists of 11 survivor leaders who advise the President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons. The survivor leaders prepare an annual report based on their own experience and expertise, their ongoing work and leadership in the field, and their meetings with various government agencies.
    - To access, visit United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking, *United States Advisory Council on Human Trafficking: Annual Report 2022*, Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons, September 2022. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.state.gov/united-states-advisory-council-on-human-trafficking-annual-report-2022/
    - The 2022 report includes discussions on thoughtful language, root causes of trafficking, and implementation of recommendations from the 2021 report.
- The U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission hosts the National Human Trafficking Resource Center, a hotline operated by a nongovernmental organization and funded by the federal government.
    - To access, visit U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, "National Human Trafficking Resource Center," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.eeoc.gov/national-human-trafficking-resource-center
    - The hotline allows callers to connect with service providers, report tips, and request training, technical assistance, and resources.
- The White House has published documents relevant to combating human trafficking, including the following:
    - *The National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking*
        - To access this report, visit White House, *The National Action Plan to Combat Human Trafficking*, December 2021. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/National-Action-Plan-to-Combat-Human-Trafficking.pdf
        - This report is informed by expertise across the federal government in anti-trafficking efforts and survivor contributions.
        - The action plan describes the priorities in federal efforts to combat human trafficking over the subsequent three years.
- The President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons
    - To access the task force's 2022 fact sheet, visit White House, "Fact Sheet: President's Interagency Task Force to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons," webpage, January 25, 2022. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/01/25/fact-sheet-presidents-interagency-task-force-to-monitor-and-combat-trafficking-in-persons/
    - The task force was created by the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000, and its purposes are to coordinate anti-trafficking efforts across 20 federal agencies and to implement the National Action Plan.

International Organization Resources

- The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, which has 57 participating states, works to address various security concerns around the world, including human trafficking. In 2022, it released a report describing the efforts of its Office of the Spe-

cial Representative and Coordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings, including its work in 2022 and plans for 2023.
  - To access, visit Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, *Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings: 2022 Report Update*, February 2023. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.osce.org/cthb/536864
  - One key priority noted in the report was that victim protection and trafficker prosecution must be "mutually reinforcing."
  - The organization held a five-week webinar series in 2020 for law enforcement and prosecutors, given to individuals from 13 countries in Europe and the United States.
    - To access information on the webinar, visit Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, "Why Focusing on Victims Matters: OSCE's Webinar Series on Victim-Centered Investigation and Prosecution," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.osce.org/cthb/476710
    - The purpose of the series was for attendees to learn to apply a "victim-centered, trauma-informed, and human rights-focused approach to the prosecution of human trafficking cases."
- The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime provides a collection of resources, including publications and training regarding drugs, organized crime, corruption, and terrorism.
  - To access, visit United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling: Resources," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/resources.html
  - Recent publications related to anti–human trafficking work include the following:
    - *Compendium of Promising Practices on Public-Private Partnerships to Prevent and Counter Trafficking in Persons*; to access, visit United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Compendium of Promising Practices on Public-Private Partnerships to Prevent and Counter Trafficking in Persons*, 2021. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.unodc.org/documents/NGO/PPP/UNODC-PPP-Interactive.pdf
    - The *Generic Manual on Combatting Human Trafficking* was released as a general training curriculum that can be paired with sector-specific curricula; to access, visit United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, *Generic Manual on Combatting Human Trafficking*, 2022. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/2022/Generic_Manual_on_Combatting_Human_Trafficking.pdf
    - The office also releases training materials, including the *Anti-Human Trafficking Training Manual for Criminal Justice Practitioners*; to access, visit United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, "Training Materials," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/human-trafficking/training-materials.html
- The United Nations Refugee Agency, formerly known as the Office of the High Commissioner for Refugees, provides support for refugees in 137 countries, including meeting basic needs and performing long-term work to improve policies for refugees. The agency has collected and released data, toolkits, handbooks, and teaching materials for working with refugees.
  - To access this information, visit United Nations Refugee Agency, "Reports and Publications," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.unhcr.org/us/reports-and-publications

Law Enforcement and Other Nongovernmental Organization Resources

- The International Association of Chiefs of Police is a worldwide association for police leaders, spanning 170 countries and 33,000 members.
  - To access, visit International Association of Chiefs of Police, "Victim Services," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.theiacp.org/topics/victim-services
- The association acts as the training and technical assistance provider for the Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services Program, which is sponsored by the Office for Victims of Crime. This program operates 80 U.S. sites, and the association provides webinars, publications, and videos to assist in setting up and maintaining program sites.
  - To access, visit International Association of Chiefs of Police, "Law Enforcement-Based Victim Services (LEV) Program," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.theiacp.org/projects/law-enforcement-based-victim-services-lev
- The Enhancing Law Enforcement Response to Victims strategy is an online resource available to federal, state, local, campus, and tribal law enforcement leaders to help transition them to more–victim-centered services gradually.
  - To access, visit International Association of Chiefs of Police, "Enhancing Law Enforcement Response to Victims (ELERV)," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://www.theiacp.org/projects/enhancing-law-enforcement-response-to-victims-elerv
- The Freedom Network is a coalition of anti-trafficking service organizations open to nongovernmental organizations and individuals, including survivors, service providers, researchers, and expert consultants. It hosts an annual conference and provides online and in-person trainings.
  - To access, visit Freedom Network, "Freedom Network Training Institute," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://freedomnetworkusa.org/training/
- The Polaris Project operates the U.S. National Human Trafficking Hotline and publishes annual reports using data collected from its hotline. The Polaris Project also offers a free human trafficking 101 course.
  - To access its annual report, visit Polaris Project, Annual Report 2022, September 2023. As of July 8, 2024: https://polarisproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Polaris_AR-2022_Final-Web.pdf
  - To access its training, visit Polaris Project, "Human Trafficking Training," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://polarisproject.org/training/
- Shared Hope International provides trainings for first responders and community members focused specifically on sex trafficking, including victim identification and survivor empowerment.
  - To access, visit Shared Hope International, "Sex Trafficking Training," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://sharedhope.org/what-we-do/prevent/training/
- The Justice Resource Institute offers training for trauma-informed care and self-care for service providers.
  - To access training resources, visit Justice Resource Institute, "Training Categories," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://jri.org/training/categories
  - To access annual reports, visit Justice Resource Institute, "Annual Reports," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://jri.org/annual_report
  - To access research, visit Justice Resource Institute, "Publications," webpage, undated. As of July 8, 2024: https://jri.org/research-and-publications/publications

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About This Report

The importance of the victim-centered approach in addressing human trafficking and the harms of this criminal activity on its victims and society were highlighted in a memo from U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas to DHS agency and office leaders. Describing the need to institutionalize the victim-centered approach, he described it as an approach that "recognizes that restoring victims' security and autonomy benefits both victims and law enforcement. A victim-centered approach seeks to minimize additional trauma, mitigate undue penalization, and provide needed stability and support to victims. A victim-centered approach both equips and encourages victims of crime to participate actively in investigations, enabling law enforcement to better detect, investigate, and prosecute perpetrators" (DHS, 2021).

As part of this effort, DHS asked the Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center (HSOAC) to conduct a literature review to build out a baseline of knowledge of what is already known about implementing a victim-centered approach for addressing human trafficking in four key areas: policies, victim identification and screening, law enforcement operations, and training.

This research was sponsored by the Center for Countering Human Trafficking (CCHT) and conducted in the Infrastructure, Immigration, & Security Operations Program of the RAND Homeland Security Research Division (HSRD), which operates the Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center (HSOAC).

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The Homeland Security Act of 2002 (Public Law 107-296, § 305, as codified at 6 U.S.C. § 185) authorizes the Secretary of Homeland Security, acting through the Under Secretary for Science and Technology, to establish one or more federally funded research and development centers (FFRDCs) to provide independent analysis of homeland security issues. The RAND Corporation operates the Homeland Security Operational Analysis Center (HSOAC) as an FFRDC for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) under contract 70RSAT22D00000001.

The HSOAC FFRDC provides the government with independent and objective analyses and advice in core areas important to the department in support of policy development, decisionmaking, alternative approaches, and new ideas on issues of significance. HSOAC also works with and supports other federal, state, local, tribal, and public- and private-sector organizations that make up the homeland security enterprise. HSOAC's research is undertaken by mutual consent with DHS and organized as a set of discrete tasks. This report presents the results of research and analysis conducted under task order 70CMSD22FR0000181, Research on a Victim-Centered Approach to Countering Human Trafficking. The results presented in this report do not necessarily reflect official DHS opinion or policy.

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